

Suggestions on the Defence of The Canadas,

ON THE

MOST ECONOMICAL PRINCIPLES OF BLOOD AND TREASURE.

BY A. W. PLAYFAIR, LIEUT.-COLONEL LANARK RIFLES.

WITH AN APPENDIX, . .

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE GREAT LAKES, THEIR DEFENCES, ETC., BEING AN ARTICLE COPIED FROM THE "ATLANTIC MONTHLY."

"The power that slumbers in a peasant's arm."—NAPOLEON.

"French infantry can never be too young."—MARSHAL ~~Bluchet~~. *My.*

The Editor of the "British Standard."

SIR,—In addressing you again on the subject of our position, I beg to make a few remarks on my letter, dated 17th July, 1863, which, though protentous in several particulars relative to our critical situation, the press generally passed over in silence, because, I suppose, they considered it prudent not to make public our weakness or liabilities. Under an absolute monarchy such as Russia, they would be perfectly correct in their views; but under our system of responsible government it is quite different. To carry any great measure, popular opinion must buoy them up. Instance the Militia Bill, which upset the Cartier-Macdonald Ministry. Of course, then, the people must be convinced of their situation, and the dire necessity for a National effort to avert a National danger, either real or imaginary. If real, hence the absolute necessity; if imaginary, we err only on the safe side. Little more than twelve months have passed, and several prominent features, in that brief time, more or less developed the soundness of my remarks. 1st: The late catastrophe, and the committee to examine and report on the solidity of the rocks on the Northern side of the St. Lawrence, at Quebec, confirms my opinion "that heavy shot directed against those rocks would bring guns and wall like an avalanche into the lower town." 2d: The prepatation being made to fortify the heights on the south side, pointed out by me. The letter says: "These heights are more elevated than the Durham Terrace, or the grand battery; they command part of the upper town and part of the lower, custom-house, shipping, etc., and are not too low to *riochet* the citadel, which shots would rebound into the town." I do not presume to say that these fortifications are to be made in consequence of my letter; but I can say, that I never heard of them until some months after it was written, and that I gave some hints on the subject in a letter written to the correspondent of the *London Times*, when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales visited

Canada. I observed, also, should the Northern States of the American Union declare war against Great Britain, thousands would rush to their standard without a bounty to serve in a war with Canada. The enemies of England have for years been emigrating to the United States, and they would rejoice at the opportunity afforded for depriving her of any of her Colonies. The public meetings in the United States show that my observations on this subject were correct, and that we ought to be prepared for every emergency from without, as well as from incendiaries within. I also remarked that, with breech-loading rifles, men lying on their bellies was the only way for the Militia to receive the enemy. The reason is obvious: the invaders must be exposed in advancing, and with breech-loaders, several more shots can be fired by each individual while endeavouring to repel their (the invaders') advance. If they have muzzle-loaders, the forces acting on the defensive must either stand up to load or turn on their backs. If they stand up they assume the most attractive attitude to the eye of the enemy, in drawing the ramrod, ramming down, and returning it. Is it not similar to a man that beckons to another at a distance, wishing to attract his attention? He not only attracts his attention, but he exposes his person to the enemy's fire. If he loads on his back, he requires more time, fires fewer shots at the advancing enemy, and takes up more room on the ground; the sum total of which is—a less quantity of lead thrown in a given time from a given space and from a given number of men, at a critical moment. It was the heavy shower of lead at New Orleans, thrown from small space, that stopped the advancing British; and a similar heavy shower of metal thrown by the British against the head of the column of the French Imperial Guards at Waterloo, caused that column to recoil. The British were formed four deep at the time. With breech-loaders, the men lie quite still, occupying only twenty-two inches, leaning on the left elbow, grasping the

rifle with the left hand, capping and loading with the right; their green blanket, rolled, forming a rest for their rifles, and a partial covering for themselves; nearly the same as did the British Light Infantry in Egypt, taking sight over their knapsacks while lying on the ground. In this position, they would take deliberate aim, holding their breath while pulling the trigger. Judging distances is the most difficult and requires the most practice of any duty an officer has to do in the field, even at a common review or inspection. I saw a regiment of the line inspected a short time since by Sir Fenwick Williams, and was asked at dinner by one of the officers, what I thought of their appearance? I answered, "admirable! all but your distances." The Montreal Volunteers marched through the streets like Regulars; but the moment they got into the field, they lost their distances; and if this is difficult with a few paces, how much more so in judging of the distance of an enemy at from 100 to 800 yards? A meritorious officer may climb the ladder of fame and get to the top of his profession, and still be deplorably deficient in this essential branch; for in one of the engagements fought in the Crimea, when the Russian cavalry were advancing on Sir Colin Campbell, he ordered his regiment to fire a volley. A correct account of the battle says that the enemy was too far off for the shot to reach them, and that the volley did no execution; but a second volley, fired when they had got closer, emptied some of their saddles, and the rest went to the right about. Thus, then, whatever judge of distances Sir Colin might have been at other times, he missed his distance on that occasion. Officers judge the distance in firing volleys, and the men place their sights according to directions; but in skirmishing, and in many other instances, it requires the men to judge for themselves; hence all the men in the Regular service are taught to judge distances. I have dwelt the longer on this most essential object with the hope of endeavoring to convince the government of the necessity of a staff of Musketry Instructors being sent to Canada. It is an old and a true saying, "What is worth doing at all, is worth well doing;" that is, methodically—calling in art and science to our assistance.

2. To hit the mark, the rifle must be held in a perfectly level position; but this can be accomplished to perfection without much practice by inserting a small spirit-level transversely just below the breech: all that would be required of the rifleman would be to see the bead when he took aim, for it would only show itself when the forearm was horizontal and in line with the notch in the back sight. I may conclude this part of my letter by merely observing, that, as the British and French are about to arm troops with breech-loaders, I was not behind the time in recommending them for the use of our Militia and Volunteers for the defence of Canada, in my letter of 1863.

As Patrick Jove says: "A well-armed nation is a strong nation; and a strong nation is a safe nation; and a safe nation is a peaceable nation: she reposes in her own strength."

It is a solemn duty for our leaders to study

economy in blood: we have none to spare. If we are driven by necessity into war, our enemies are about 7 to 1; our position for defence a very difficult one—length without breadth; our stake at issue enormous; a foreign emigration filling the enemy's ranks—ranks trained in the tented field—many of them our implacable enemies, with no failure to their treasury; and so long as their fanaticism lasts, and old rags can be manufactured into paper, their pride will be gratified, and they can pour out the vial of their wrath against England on the heads of loyal inoffensive Canadians, on Canadian soil. These are momentous truths; and we are drifting into the vortex with our eyes open, perfectly content with raising a few Volunteers, which, meritorious as is the act in the individuals that compose the companies, is not a flash in the pan to the real necessities of our position. Not a gun, mounted or dismounted, except one, on the citadel of Quebec, but is behind the times we live in to defend our frontier towns and cities, arm our flotillas; nor have we a field piece (with the exception of a few brought out at the time of the Trent affair) fit to cope with the enemy in the field, with the stern reality before our eyes of the advantage of the modern artillery of France over the Austrians at the battle of Solferino, and the continued struggle in England and France to arm their ships with rifled cannon. The correspondent of the *London Times* says: "After the terrible lesson of Solferino, no English force should be allowed to go into action on such unequal terms as the Austrians did." No time, therefore, should be lost, if recent experiments are not at variance with my assertions, in the erection of establishments at Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec, for rifling the best of our old guns. It may be said Kingston may be more convenient. True, in some respects; but not so safe, for it would also be more convenient for an enemy to surprise and shell the town in its present state from heavy guns afloat, and compel it to surrender. Ottawa is fifty miles inland; "Strong by nature," as reported by Col. By to Lord Wellington: a dense population around it, with internal communication to Montreal, and a canal to transport the guns to and from the lakes. We are quite sensible that England will do all that is in her power; but it is too much to expect her to supply us with rifled guns at the present, for her own safety depends on her keeping pace with France—in short, with the whole continent of Europe—in this essential part of her armament; but she might send out the necessary Staff, and our Provincial Government join in the outlay; for we must not expect to get off scot free from the impending scourge that looms in our immediate front. The established fact of the superiority of rifled cannon over smooth-bored ones shows that what is proposed is neither an experiment nor a speculation, but an absolute necessity. The advantages would be great, by placing us, in the first place, more on an equality in the field in proportion to the number of our guns; and in our forts and ships a rifled 32-pounder would be as effective as a 68-pounder throwing round shot; for the 32-pounder would throw cylindro-conical

shot, weighing at least 50lbs. These guns are much handier in forts than any others; and being comparatively light, vessels are thereby enabled to carry a greater number of guns. Thus, a vessel carrying rifled thirty-two pounders could throw more metal at a broadside than could one armed with 68-pounders throwing round shot. The great push in France at the present time is the arming of her navy with 30 pounder rifled guns, having grooves three inches in breadth, and an eighth of an inch in depth, with a twist of one-sixth; and I am sensible that England is not far behind her. What has been said of 32-pounders is applicable to all other guns, whatever their calibre may be. From which well-ascertained facts the following advantages are to be gained by having our guns rifled: 1. Carry greater distance; 2. Greater weight of metal; 3. Greater accuracy in striking the object aimed at; and, 4. Greater velocity, which increases the momentum.

In my former letter, I also observed what a mark for riflemen would our militia officers be in their scarlet coats, while the men were in homespun grey! The letter reads thus: "Only think for a moment of our youths standing up 'in scarlet as a target for a quick-sighted rifleman, lying in the grass or in a corn-field, 'dressed in pea-green, with a telescope or revolving rifle!'" How far I am again astray, let the correspondent of the New York Herald before Yorktown prove. He says:

"Our skirmishers, intent as astronomers, silent as fishermen, lie under cover all day, like our riflemen before Sebastopol. For three days now they have practised before the rebel batteries. Numerous glasses observe every movement made; and, if an adventurous rebel indulges in a peep, he is of course instantly seen and instantly announced. 'There's a head!' says one, and instantly five or six begin to hunt for it through those wonderful telescope sights, and some further directions from the original discoverer helps the hunt. Should that head go down as soon as it is seen, the better for it. Sometimes it stays long enough to be found and sighted, and then is almost inevitably pierced; for the accuracy of fire with these rifles at REST is scarcely less than miraculous."

Not only scarlet for the militia and some of the volunteers, but our riflemen with their INVISIBLE GREEN—that is, if I understand my mother tongue, *the green invisible, not the rifleman*. Hence, if the green be invisible, it leaves the rifleman in visible black. Now black is as conspicuous as scarlet: if not, why is the "bull's eye" in the British service painted black? To confirm my assertion, let me ask another question which I once put to a colonel that had belonged to the Rifle Brigade. I remarked to him that his uniform was too dark, and asked him if the dress was not intended to make them as invisible as possible. He replied, "Of course it is." I then asked him, "Which would be the most invisible in a grass field—a green parrot or a crow?" He immediately admitted my argument to be correct: and further, the officers are preposterously conspicuous. I took a position nine hundred yards from the Volunteers who were being reviewed by H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, at Montreal, and I could with my naked eye discern every officer when he faced to the right by his steel scabbard, and

when he wheeled into line (his coffin ornaments) breastplate, chain, and whistle. If the majority of these gentlemen (should they be called into action) do not pay too much for their *whistle*, then I know nothing of war on this continent, or the Prussian army anything of war in the present day on the continent of Europe. In 1849-'50, at the commencement of the Schleswig-Holstien difficulty, the Danish riflemen picked off the Prussian officers to such an extent that all their ornaments, helmets, buttons, etc. etc. were ordered to be bronzed. These officers have plain clothing like the men, but of finer material. The eighteen manoeuvres, as practised in the British army, are copied from the Prussians; and if we have copied our tactics from the great Frederick, we should not be too proud to profit by the further experience of the Prussian system in conforming dress to the exigencies of the times, in which life and success in action are so intimately blended. Again: I see a general order in the United States' army, that sashes, shoulder-straps, and saddle-trappings on the officers' horses, are not to be worn in the field, in consequence of the great number of officers that have been either killed or wounded in proportion to the rank and file. I could multiply proofs; but sufficient has been stated to show the necessity of a change in the present uniform; for the mode of warfare on this continent, so far as small arms are concerned, is more American than European—the Americans having derived their rudiments of warfare from their various contests with the aborigines.

COL. JERVOIS' REPORT.

Colonel Jervois' Report on the Defence of Canada has just come to hand, and I hasten to make a few remarks.

He tells us that Canada with men and money can be defended. I am of the same opinion. He proposes extensive fortifications that will cost £1,343,000, but does not say how long it will take to have these fortifications in readiness to defend the country. Is it to be supposed that the Americans will be so complaisant as to wait until the works are all finished, armed and garrisoned with experienced gunners? Is it "the custom of war in like cases?" Did not the Americans send their ships to sea with sealed instructions, to be opened in certain latitudes on a particular day, and what was the information when opened? War declared at Washington with England this day at 12 o'clock! Thus a broadside into the Bellidere then in sight knocking in her poop, was the first notice of the war of 1812. If they declare war, is it not more than probable they will do it immediately after the difference between them and the South is settled? Or, why would the North propose at the peace conference not to disband the Southern Army, but turn them over to the North for foreign purposes, which must mean Canada, or Mexico? This shows plainly what they want to do while they have so large an army of experienced men. If this should take place, what good could result from unfinished fortifications? And, if they were finished, fortified cities are not what they were in ancient times. Marshal Soult

made a speech of two hours duration against fortified cities, at the time Louis Philippe proposed to fortify Paris. The renowned Marshal gave a number of instances of armies leaving the fortified cities and coming out to meet the enemy. He defended Toulon himself with 21,000 men against 71,000,—not by shutting himself up in the town, but by entrenching his army in advance of the city. And the Duke of Wellington in his letter to Sir John Burgoyne, who wished to erect some fortifications at the time England expected invasion, replied—"I know of no mode of resistance, much less of protection from danger, except by an army in the field." Again, in his public letter on the same subject he said, "If 150,000 militia were raised, and the regular army augmented, he would undertake to defend England." Napoleon the I. dreaded an entrenched camp. The night previous to the battle of Waterloo, he ordered his engineers to be out before day, so as to reconnoitre as soon as light, and report if the British had thrown up entrenchments during the night; and when he received the report in the morning that they had not, he exclaimed with a smile on his countenance, "Then I have them, these English." Of course I do not mean Quebec, the key to the Canadas, or Kingston the naval dock yard with its stores—they must be fortified if time permits. A letter recently written by Lt.-Genl. Cust to the London *Times* on Canadian defence, supports my argument. He says, "The classic ramparts of Antwerp, which have figured in so many pages of military history, have already become pleasure grounds for the recreation of the inhabitants. The entrenched camp that has been formed around it extends for several miles in front of the old walls." Again, he says, "If I am not mistaken, the continental engineers give a very extended preference to entrenched camps about towns as a general principle."

I think we have some proof of the folly in the Southern policy, spending so much time, blood and treasure, in fortifying and defending towns and cities, and losing them one after another, being decimated piece-meal, shutting themselves up in fortifications, and allowing the surrounding country, with their communications to be destroyed, and their supplies cut off—dividing their force instead of concentrating it. The revolutionary club in Paris denounced as traitors any of their commanders that would risk a battle with part of their army. Concentrated action was their decree, and the guillotine was the reward of disobedience. Rapidity and concentration were the two great characteristics of Napoleon's success in planting the standard of France on most of the capitals of Europe. Wellington said, "Napoleon had the greatest power of concentrating an army of any man he ever saw or read of." We cannot build fortifications with that rapidity the stake at issue demands. *Nor can we concentrate our garrisons when the forts are built.* A sufficient number of troops must be left to defend them. £50,000 has been voted in the Imperial Parliament for this year; and suppose our Provincial Legislative vote the same sum for the same purpose, that would make £100,000.—The cost of the fortifications is esti-

mated at £1,343,000. At that rate it would take upwards of thirteen years to accomplish the work proposed; but the money might be borrowed, and the forts built in a much shorter time. But after they are built what is five or six fortifications to defend 1000 miles of frontier with \$200,000,000 of public property on the lines. It is true the distance is shortened—a great part of Canada is left to defend itself; all south of the St. Lawrence, except the ground covered by the intended fortification opposite Montreal, and all west of Lake Ontario, left to the tender mercies of an invading army, composed of the scum of all nations, to commit rapine and plunder with impunity. But we are told in the report for our consolation, "Only about six months in the year, when military operations on a large scale could be carried on against them, and thus those forces could resist an attack with the best possible chance of success." Let me ask while we are shut up in fortifications, what would the enemies' raiders be doing? Let some of the unfortunate inhabitants of the once fruitful valley of the Shenandoah answer my question, or some of the homeless sufferers on the line of death and destruction in Sherman's extensive march. Would they not destroy every thing that sustains life in man or beast? and as Canada in its present state is like the mathematician's definition of a line, length without breadth, take up some position and cut off all communication with the arsenal at Quebec? Was it not by this mode of warfare Richmond fell, and are we with our eyes open going to fall into the same trap? Was it not the fear of communication being cut off that caused the late Sir George Prevost in the war of 1812 to keep a great part of his army along the line to protect the munitions of war? And, was it not the absorption of so large a part of the Canadian army that caused that great statesman the late Lord Castlereagh to say, "Canada is alongside a powerful republic, and in the event of another war must have internal communications?"

Fortified cities invite a siege train to bring all the horrors of war to your own fireside. Fortifications are things of time—small arms for the masses are for the moment. Napoleon, meditating on the battle-field at Lutzen, and observing the slender figures and long hair of the peasant youths of Prussia clothed as they left the plough, with two-thirds more of his conscripts, cold in death, exclaimed, "The might that slumbers in a peasant's arm!" Give us breech-loading rifles, and we will show the might that slumbers in the arms of the Yeomanry of Canada, who have too much sense to exchange their allegiance from the mild sceptre of Queen Victoria for a land of debt and despotism.

It is stated in the report that military operations cannot be carried on in winter. This shows a want of provincial knowledge. Montgomery made an attempt to storm Quebec in winter; Col. MacDonald of the Glengarry Fencibles passed over the ice when the snow was deep and took Ogdensburg. The 104th Regt. marched from St. John, New Brunswick on snow-shoes to Quebec in the depth of winter, some hundreds of miles, without a mark on a tree, with from four

to six feet of snow under our feet, a dense forest in front, and nought but the canopy of Heaven over our heads—dragging on Indian sleighs our arms, knapsacks, provisions &c. &c., numbering 1000 bayonets, besides fifty officers and non-commissioned officers, without losing a single man, although many nights we dug out the snow with our snow-shoes—made fires, and lay on the hemlock brush. We crossed the ice at Quebec on the 27th day, in good health and spirits, rested ten days, started off the 18th of March atiptoe for the seat of war, 350 miles further, three feet of snow, which in a short time became mud under our feet. Thus military operations can be carried on in winter, in British North America, as well as in Northern Europe, of which I could give many instances. I confess that opposite these intended fortifications at Montreal, is the most beautiful champagne country I ever saw, and a large army might be cantoned. I commanded a detachment at La Colle, and I never passed from Laprarie to St. Johns without its putting me in mind of a long line of tents,—the small whitewashed houses for so many miles on the road, which is a perfect level. Now they have railroads leading from the United States. Again, I would observe the moat or wet ditch at certain seasons of the year might be of great advantage to the enemy. It will freeze over, and I know by the rapids in the river there will be a decline in the ditch. A temporary dam might raise the water, and village pumps abstracted and put through the ice make it thick enough in one night for any purpose that may be required by the assailing force. This is no experiment. Any person reading details of campaigns in Northern Europe must be assured of it. How often did Napoleon cross his artillery in the morning on ice that would just bear the men to rig the pumps the nights before? Again, let me ask the question, what is to be done with the mountain that commands the whole of the city of Montreal, and the internal part of the proposed fortifications? Does it not extend for some distance north west? Could not an enemy land above and take possession of it? Is it not the most commanding position? Then it ought to become the citadel, and its name should be Mount Royal. From the best information I could gain from prisoners, at the time the Americans made three attempts to take Montreal, in the war of 1812, one under General Hampton 5000 strong, repulsed by the gallant Col. De Salaberry at Chataguay. A second landing at Fort George, expecting to enlarge their army by marching through the Province, giving an opportunity for the discontented to join them, repulsed at Stoney Creek, by the force under Col. Harvey; the third, landing at Chrysler's Farm, repulsed by the 49th and Canadian Fencibles, under Col. Morrison, to the best of my memory. Thus the enemy attempted to gain possession of Montreal, once only from the south shore and twice by the north shore of the St. Lawrence: and, unquestionably, a United States' army could be landed much easier at Cornwall than at Montreal. It is true Victoria Bridge requires a substantial *tete du pont*.

In a pamphlet published on a Pacific railway, in 1852, I advocated a Union of the British American Provinces, because union is strength, morally and physically, and would place us in a better position for defence. I have strong reasons to advocate their union now, and can add something more to my former opinion. We cannot in all conscience expect Lower Canadian ministers, during our present alliance, to assist in any great improvements to the West, as it would only add to present difficulties with respect to the vexed question of representation by population. A Federal Union would do away with this obstacle, and Upper Canada might then extend her improvements, which are inducements to immigration, as far and fast as she is able; and as a population which has an interest in the soil is the right stamp for militia to defend the country, it would be sound policy to consummate it with as little delay as possible. The next desirable object, within the power of our own Legislature, is an increase in our defensive force, which could be accomplished by an alteration in the militia law, changing the ages of the service men from 18 to 45 to 16 to 50.—England, at the time she expected to be invaded by France, made all liable to carry arms from 17 to 50; but many between fifteen and sixteen were enrolled in the Volunteer force, the writer amongst others. Mere boys (gallant little fellows!) of from twelve to fifteen, twice repulsed the storming party at Fort Fisher; and when refused permission to go to the front, volunteered to escort prisoners. To defend Canada systematically, I would recommend the formation of two Staff corps, one for each Province. They should each consist of one lieutenant-colonel, one major, six captains, and twelve first lieutenants, from the Rifle Brigade, or some other Rifle regiment of the regular service, and six second lieutenants whose connexions are *bona fide* settlers in Canada, and whose good conduct and loyalty are conspicuous. They should be highly recommended from a respectable source for loyalty. As vacancies occur, they should receive promotion in the Canadian Provincial Staff corps, which should be kept up in time of peace, and become a Provincial establishment altogether, so that, like Switzerland, we might be prepared to defend the country at any moment at the least expense of blood and treasure. Each company should have twelve drill sergeants and twelve buglers, and whatever number of musketry instructors that could in the meantime be spared from the military school at Hythe, in Kent, to each regiment, until a sufficient number of British Americans were trained for that purpose in schools under the immediate superintendence of the lieutenant-colonels and adjutants of the Canadian Staff corps, at their permanent head-quarters, where ground should be purchased, butts erected, &c., for this most requisite object. England could offer no objection; for the better we are prepared to defend ourselves the less number of British troops we should require; and the officers could have no objection on their part, as they would of course have promotion—a major the rank of lieutenant-colonel, a captain a majority, first lieutenants

companies, second lieutenants made first lieutenants. Thus, in beginning at the foundation, we may shortly organize a Provincial military nucleus, on the most approved principles of modern warfare.

Having proposed the means for instruction in drill, musketry, and bugle sounds, I would now propose, that, with as little delay as possible, arrangements be made to procure 200,000 breech-loading rifles of the most approved pattern, to be issued to the ballotted men in the rural districts—the oath of allegiance administered, and a receipt taken—with strict orders to place them over the heads of their beds, with 120 rounds of ball cartridge to each man, which would enable our militia to punish on the spot any intruders, and increase their confidence in themselves. They would naturally say, "There are 200,000 of us, and we have twenty-four millions of location tickets divided amongst us, which we will deal out to all raiders with a willing mind and a liberal hand." I am fully aware that there is British military authority against me in proposing to issue the arms to the men.—Col. Lyceans in his Report proposed the building in which the arms and clothing were to be deposited to be surrounded by a stone wall, and all the garrison to defend it was one solitary staff sergeant! Col. Murdo, a Superintendent of Volunteers in England, suggests, with the approval of Col. Jervois, that the building should be surrounded by pickets. This might do for defence in the North-west against Indians. But permit me to observe, in the face of this threefold opinion, that there is a wonderful difference between our happy island home, with its superabundant population of twenty-three millions—its standing army—surrounded by the monarchs of the ocean, manned by tens of thousands of her renowned "blue jackets"—and Canada, a thousand miles in length, with a sparse population of less than three millions, alongside a powerful Republic of nearly thirty millions, with a network of railways to the dividing line—a standing army of four hundred thousand men, who are inured to hardship, and have been engaged in the destruction of life and property during the past four years, and to which may be added a body of England's most implacable enemies, begging to be allowed to form the van in the invasion of Canada, without either bounty or pay!

In the opinion of that great master of the art of war, Napoleon, the two most prominent features in a good General are courage and judgment, i.e., to know when to fight, and when to let it alone. These he termed Generals of equilibrium. Now, judgment is the quality of distinguishing propriety and impropriety. We show our courage by wishing to have arms to defend our country. Would we show our judgment in exposing them to be taken,—perhaps used against ourselves, or destroyed by military raids wholesale? Who ever heard of a regiment depositing their arms in one house, and sleeping in another on the borders of another State? Discretion is said to be the better part of valour.—It will be said the arms will be destroyed, &c., &c. An Act of Parliament on the subject, and

the Staff Corps will see to that part of the business.

But to effectually defend Canada, we must have a Navy on the Lakes. So far as Ontario and Erie are concerned, the British government can send out gun-boats; and what is wanted in capacity must be made up in numbers. Boats of light draught and heavy guns are for some purposes more efficient than large vessels. It has been said, if our fleet had drawn less water, Cronstadt would have crumbled into dust. During the Russian war, it cannot be denied that small vessels of light draught and heavy metal effected the most injury to the enemy in that controversy on water: witness Bomersund. The necessity for a fleet is obvious, from the history of the war of 1812. The destruction of the fleet on Lake Erie caused General Proctor's disastrous retreat. The destruction of the fleet on Lake Champlain caused the retreat of Sir George Prevost with his army from Plattsburg. The great caution of the Admiral on Lake Ontario, Sir James Yeo, always refusing to come to an action unless he had the weather gauge, saved Kingston. During the short time he was obliged to remain in port, Toronto was taken,—the fort blown up—government-house and property reduced to ashes, and Gen. Sir Robert H. Sheafe obliged to retreat with his army. Thus, a fleet is a decided necessity, for all the Army that could be sent to Kingston, and above, would be of no avail.—While the enemy could place heavy guns afloat, infantry or field artillery could not show themselves. What I have said of the defences of Lake Ontario relative to gun-boats is applicable to Lake Erie. Only the Rideau canal is safe from the enemy; and quite the reverse is the case I am sorry to say with the Welland Canal. Lake Huron is entirely out of our power to defend by water, unless a fleet was built; which would be a great risk, as there is ship navigation from Lake Michigan into it, on which the Americans are building their gun-boats, and have also a numerous mercantile marine, which would immediately be pressed into the service, either in the shape of privateers, or sold to the Government as was done during the last war upon the sea coast. It would be consummate folly to attempt to send up armed vessels from Lake Erie into Lake Huron after hostilities had commenced,—Detroit (the Narrows) and the St. Clair Flats, with the numerous Americans living on the south shore of the narrow river, giving the enemy an opportunity to stud the passage with innumerable torpedoes, which precludes the possibility of successful communication. Thus not only are we shut out of Lake Huron, but out of Lake Superior also, with its copper mines, and our postal communication with the Red River settlement with 10,000 inhabitants, except by the circuitous route of Hudson's Bay once a year, leaving a coast undefended of about 800 miles.—Thus, it is evident that sound policy shows us that a maritime supremacy on our side on the Lakes is necessary, because our object and aim is profound *peace*, endeavoring *only* to hold our *own*. The Americans, on the contrary, are *aggressive*, for the purpose of enforcing the *Monroe doctrine*. I see no other way to ac-

compleish this desirable object than the completion of the Ottawa Canal, which will give us internal communication, and enable the "blue jackets" of old England, in their own ships, to meet their American cousins on fresh water.— This would be the cheapest and surest way of establishing a supremacy on the lakes. The estimate laid down in the report of the Engineer is \$12,057,680, calculated for vessels of 1,000 tons burden—twelve feet water on the mitre sills—locks forty-five feet wide and two hundred and fifty feet long. Internal communication was first mooted by Lord Castlereagh, and was followed up by Earl Bathurst in forming the Perth Military depot, and Richmond Military settlement; and when Lord Wellington became Master-General of Ordnance he sent out Col. Bye to construct the Rideau Canal and purchase any place strong by nature. Col. Bye reported Ottawa "strong by nature," and could be made very strong by art; and he in consequence was directed to purchase all he thought necessary.— Hence the great boon in the Ordnance lands.— Here we have demonstration of the opinion of the great statesman above mentioned of the necessity of internal communication, carried out at the expense of the Imperial treasury. The question will perhaps be asked, the same as I have put to Col. Jervois relative to fortifications at Montreal,—what good would an unfinished canal do in the event of a war? I answer, no more good than unfinished fortifications.

But the Ottawa canal is not only a *military necessity*, but a commercial desideratum of the greatest magnitude, not only to the Canadas but to Great Britain; and I may go further by adding *Europe* and the North-western States of America, and still further, the *world at large*, as I shall demonstrate before closing this subject. In the first place, England, with her contracted island territory, and large manufacturing population, imports annually a vast amount of breadstuffs; and Chicago, on Lake Michigan, is perhaps the cheapest part in the known world for an abundant supply of the necessities of life. The value of breadstuffs imported into Liverpool alone from this quarter, from 1861 to 1863, was £12,643,918: the transit expenses, owing to the inadequate means of conveyance, amounted to £8,826,851, the original cost at Chicago being only £3,817,517. By the expenditure of £4,000,000, including the alterations at Lachine, a saving of five hundred miles will be obtained; and vessels drawing twelve feet of water, built in the primeval forest, can be laden with breadstuffs, and proceed direct to Liverpool without breaking bulk, which will reduce the price of freight at least one half. I need not say that a country that can raise one hundred and fifty millions of bushels of wheat and five hundred millions bushels of corn, and immense quantities of pork and beef, must consume an immense amount of manufactured goods; and thus far I think that Great Britain as well as Canada has a direct interest in the enterprise, and that it will prove a commercial benefit as it is a *military necessity*. But what has been already said is scarcely a tithe of the advantages which, by the construction of the canal in question,

would accrue politically and commercially to the nation. And when peace shall have been fully established between the two sections of the Republic, another link may be added to this chain of ship navigation in the shape of a railway fifteen hundred miles in length from the head waters of Lake Superior westwardly, by which a communication will be opened for military and commercial purposes between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans; and England cannot surrender this communication without perilling her high standing as a nation. She would have to aid the construction of this great line of railway, if she wishes to preserve her ascendancy on this continent and the sceptre of commerce between Europe and Asia in her own hand; for the day is fast approaching when the products of the East will not be carried round the globe to supply the remaining fourth. Doubling the Cape of Good Hope to bring the products of the East to this continent, may be compared to the sun travelling round the world instead of the world revolving on its own axis. The Eastern terminus would be at the mouth of Fraser River which empties into the St. Fuca straits, 5600 miles from Canton, the commercial capital of a nation containing four hundred millions of inhabitants. If I place one foot of my compasses at the mouth of Fraser River and describe a circle, the other will pass through London, the largest commercial city in Europe, and through Canton, the largest commercial city in Asia: consequently, they are equi-distant. To Canton it is ship navigation; to London it would be fifteen hundred miles railway, and the remainder of the distance ship navigation of one thousand tons burthen. The Rev. G. C. Nicoly says: "Its maritime importance is entirely confined to the straits of Juan de Fuca and the southern extremity of Vancouver's Island. Here are presented a series of splendid harbours, unrivalled in quality and capacity, at least within the same limits; and here, as has been remarked, it is evident the future emporium of the Pacific in Western America will be found."

The London *Morning Chronicle* says: "No one can doubt that the western coast of North America is about to become the theatre of vast commercial and political importance; and it is impossible to estimate adequately the value which may soon accrue to every harbour, coal mine, forest, and plain, in that quarter of the globe."

And Sir James Brooke, the Rajah of Borneo, thus writes:—"By the adoption of a foreign policy, in entire harmony with the spirit of the age, our merchants would obtain access to every portion of the 12,000 islands: that is to say, be permitted to supply more or less largely forty millions of people. There is not a single island in this immense group which would not contribute valuable materials to the commerce of the world. Our imagination is apt to be dazzled by the mention of gold, diamonds, spices, odoriferous gums, and all those costly articles of luxury with which nearly every part of Asia abounds. The Archipelago is not wanting in these fascinating commodities: gold and dia-

monds exist in great quantities in Borneo. It has been suggested, too, that the maritime districts of Pulo Ha'amantan would produce cotton not inferior in quality to that grown in the uplands of Georgia. In this case, no language can exaggerate the importance of the island to Great Britain; for, doubtless, a time will come when the United States, applying themselves more extensively to manufactures, will consume the whole of the cotton grown in the Southern States, when we shall obviously be dependent for a supply on the various provinces of India and the islands of the Archipelago."

This is the second time I published the important information given by Sir James Brooke, relative to the facilities of obtaining cotton independent of the Southern States. The first was in 1852 in a pamphlet on a railway from Lake Superior to Fraser River. Perhaps, if the merchants had then taken the hint, there would not have been so much distress in England for that article as has been of late.

These two links between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans once accomplished, those inland seas would become the centre of the commerce of the North American continent. I base this opinion on the facilities which exist for the navigation of those spacious waters, extending 600 miles from north to south and upwards of 800 from east to west, washing the shores for some thousands of miles of fertile lands, with their tributaries and outlets of natural and artificial navigation, roads and railways to the interior and to the Atlantic seaboard. And as the several arteries, veins, &c., receive the blood propelled through the heart and diffuse it through the whole system, so produce or manufactures from the Pacific arriving at the terminus at Lake Superior would be divided into innumerable channels of trade and by them distributed all over the continent. In the first instance, 300 miles of the shore of the above named Lake with its different avenues of trade, would be opened to a vast territory, capable of sustaining many millions of inhabitants; and as soon as they descend into Lake Huron, two great arteries of commerce immediately present themselves—the one on the right hand through Lake Michigan by Chicago, &c., by natural and artificial navigation, to the Gulf of Mexico; the other on the left hand by the legitimate course of the St. Lawrence waters and lakes improved by the artificial navigation of the Welland Canal, presenting on its way to the Gulf of St. Lawrence various conveyance in the shape of canals and railroads to the American-Atlantic cities. And last, but not least, the Ottawa Canal advocated in these pages, which would enter the mouth of French River where it empties into the Georgian Bay, and where a Navy yard and depot must be established as soon as we can get guns afloat to protect it, while being constructed.

Our geographical position gives us an advantage in a Pacific railway, as well as for the transit of produce from Chicago to Europe by Quebec, over the United States, which no exertion can obviate, providing we avail ourselves of our national highways decreed by Divine Providence.

A degree of longitude at the equator is sixty miles, and at sixty degrees is only thirty miles or one-half. Now the route from the western coast of Ireland by Quebec to the Pacific, at the mouth of Fraser River may traverse ten degrees of latitude, that is, from latitude 45 deg. to 55 deg. The 45th deg. is forty miles and fifteen seconds; the 55th deg. is 34 miles and forty-one seconds. We might average it at 39 miles, which is not quite $\frac{1}{2}$ of a deg. at the equator.—Hence the time is not far distant when, by steam navigation and railway, passengers will be nearly half way across this continent to the Pacific by the time a steamer to New York will reach the wharf. The mail *via* Quebec will be within 1500 miles of the terminus at the mouth of Fraser River. It must be remembered that, when the steamer arrives at Quebec, another bound for New York, allowing equal speed, will be 470 geographical miles from New York, allowing twelve miles an hour for an Atlantic steamer on the average, and twenty-four miles an hour for the rail cars. And as they do not measure by geographical miles for rail cars we will add fifty in round numbers to put the whole into statute miles, which will be 520. Double that for the speed of the cars, and the mail bags will be 1040 miles on their way across the continent.

From what has been said it is obvious that Lower Canada and the eastern part of Upper Canada have but one interest; and the bail is at our foot, if we only improve the golden moment. The real highway of the world will be open through our capital, and a vast amount of produce that would otherwise be drawn off to the Atlantic cities will pass through Quebec. In a letter which I wrote some twelve years since, I stated (and I am of the same opinion still), that, if Montreal or Quebec is to become the New Orleans of the St. Lawrence, one or other of them must intercept the traffic of the Lakes; and it is only by constructing the Ottawa canal and railway that this grand object can be attained, and Lower Canada become the emporium of Western produce, and assume that position in the commercial world that nature has designed.

It is impossible to imagine the advantages, commercially, politically, and in a military point of view, if the chain of communication pointed out by me was once formed. Only think for a moment: 1500 miles of railway to connect, on British territory, our great inland navigation to an ocean 11,000 miles long and 7000 broad—a chain passing over a country with the ore of every metal struggling through its surface, and coal cropping out four hundred miles of the way; at the same time opening up a little world for the redundant population of Europe, and enabling England to turn the tide of emigration which is now flowing to the United States to her own dominions, emancipating the Red River colony, etc. If I am correct, British Columbia according to ship reckoning is 20,000 miles from England by sea; through British America it is only 6500. Our Legislature have already granted 4,000,000 acres towards the cost of constructing a railway through the Ottawa valley. If this railroad were constructed, reinforcements

might be sent in less than a quarter of the time required by the old route, as they would pass over the continent by rail (and if the route once pointed out by me between Quebec and the straits of Belle Isle is practicable, of which I tried to get a *reconnaissance* when I had a seat in Parliament, troops could be carried from the western coast of Ireland to the Pacific in ten days.) Here, then, is an advantage in a military point of view. Again, commercially: it is 14,000 miles from Canton to England by the Cape of Good Hope; from England to Lake Superior 4100. By the first-mentioned route, goods would be carried, from China to Lake Superior, a distance of 18,100 miles. When the proposed route shall have been constructed, 7100 miles will bring goods to the shores of the great Lake—the commercial heart of North America—thus saving about 9000 miles. It will not only be the centre of commerce, but it is the geographical centre: it is half way between St. Fca straits and Halifax, and about equi-distant from the isthmus of Darien and the Polar sea.

And I repeat what I have published previously. While England continues to hold the North American Provinces, she may be compared to a mighty Colossus, with one foot on the Atlantic and the other on the Pacific, holding in his hand the sceptre of the commerce of Europe and Asia, with the highway of the world beneath his feet.

I cannot close this letter without some observations on the conduct of our trans-Atlantic enemies—not only ours, but England's also. I would inform them that their speeches and writings are cherished, and go the rounds of the American newspapers. I would also remind them that history tells us "that the pen of the notorious infidel, Tom Paine, did more for the Revolution of America than any 10,000 men with their bayonets." All the difference between them and him is, they are finishing what he began, by dropping us into the *hot-bed* of Republicanism. How dishonorable! how unjust! how cruel! What base ingratitude to abandon the sons of U.E. Loyalists, whose fathers left their homes, their all, and fled into a wilderness rather than forfeit their allegiance to the British Crown! and many of the younger branches thus nurtured in the lap of loyalty fought side by side with the British troops in the war of 1812, sealed their principles with their life's blood, and were burned on the same pile, or buried in the same grave, with the Regulars; and at the same time the Federal States are building up a Confederacy on this continent which, from its extensive seaboard, would become a most gigantic maritime power such as the world has never witnessed; and such will eventually be the case if British America falls into the hands of the United States with their uncompromising ideas of

America for the Americans; and of course all the West India Islands as the broad Atlantic are to be the boundary, known as the Monroe Doctrine, a transcript of Jacobinism to the very letter. Were not the revolutionary armies sent out by the Decree of the Jacobin Club in Paris to revolutionize and establish republicanism on the continent of Europe? It is the same *ism* and the self-same spirit raising its hydra head in America. Witness the Mexican movement for the extermination of monarchy in that quarter, and the selection of members for a military commission holding the power of life and death (a packed jury under payment and expecting promotion) to try civilians in time of peace for murder, not trusting to the ordinary channels of justice in the courts of law already established.

But in returning again to the policy of those degenerate Englishmen who are supporting Jacobinism on this continent, I would observe it is surprising the severe lesson they have lately had in England in the want of raw material to keep some millions of their people from almost starvation does not open their eyes to the great resources of this continent, and the contingencies to which England is liable with her small territory and numerous manufacturing population. I can well remember when the 4lb loaf was 1s 10d in London, and at that period England had only between ten and eleven millions of people; I can also remember that cheap bread was the constant cry of the manufacturing community, and the large loaf at a small price was the stalking horse into Parliament in the manufacturing districts. At the present, England has 23,000,000, and the bosom of the noble St. Lawrence is the highway to the largest bread market in the world. I ask, is it sound policy to let it go out of our hands? Again, as long as I can remember, politicians of all shades contended for balance of power: as soon as British America goes by the board, balance of power goes with it. Let me ask—with Russia, United States, France, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, &c., and England, like Noah's dove, not a place for the sole of her foot, where would be the balance of power, and as Dr. Russell says with it, "the decadence of the British Empire?"

After my letter was in type, and the first portion of it published, I saw a well-written article on "The Great Lakes; their Outlets and Defences," in the *PERTH COURIER*, copied from the *ATLANTIC MONTHLY* for June, by an American; and as truth loses nothing by investigation, I will give it *verbatim* in the shape of an Appendix.

Bathurst, June 1st, 1865.

APPENDIX.

The Great Lakes; their Outlets and Defences.

By Samuel Clarke

C.

Four years ago there appeared in this magazine two articles upon the Great Lakes and their harbors.* In these papers the commercial importance of the Lakes was set forth, and it was shown that their commerce was at that time nearly equal in amount to the whole foreign trade of the country. Within those four years the relative value of these two branches of commerce has greatly changed. The foreign trade, under the efforts of open foes and secret enemies, has fallen off very largely. A committee of the New York Board of Trade, in an appeal to the Secretary of the Navy for protection against British pirates, made the statement, that the imports into that port during the first quarter of 1860, in American vessels, were \$62,558,326,—in foreign vessels, \$30,918,051; and that in 1863, during the same period, the imports in American vessels were \$23,403,830,—in foreign vessels, \$85,889,853;—in other words, that in three years of war, our navigation on the ocean had declined more than one half, and that of foreign nations had increased in nearly the same proportion.

The two great branches of internal trade before the war consisted of the trade of the lakes and the canals leading from them to the seaboard, and the trade of the Mississippi and its tributaries. The latter branch being interrupted or destroyed by the Rebellion, it follows that at the present time the principal commerce left to the Atlantic cities is that of the Great Lakes and the States about them, usually known as the Northwest.

The commerce amounts at present to at least twelve hundred millions of dollars annually, and increases so rapidly that all estimates of its prospective value have hitherto fallen far short of the truth. It employs about two thousand vessels and twenty thousand sailors, besides four great lines of railroad. It sends to the seaboard one hundred million bushels of grain, two millions hogs, and half a million of cattle, composing the principal part of the food of the Atlantic States, (it being well known that the wheat crop of New York would hardly feed her people for one-third of the year, and that of New England is sufficient for only about three weeks' consumption,) and affording a large surplus for exportation.

In a memorial of the Hon. S. B. Ruggles of New York to President Lincoln, on the enlargement of the New York canals, he says,—“The cereal wealth yearly floated on these waters now exceeds one hundred million bushels. It is difficult to present

a distinct idea of a quantity so enormous. Suffice it to say, that the portion of it (about two-thirds) moving to market on the Erie and Oswego Canals requires a line of brats more than forty miles long to carry it.’ On the lakes it requires a fleet of five thousand vessels, carrying twenty thousand bushels each. If loaded in railroad-cars of the usual capacity, it would take two hundred and fifty thousand of them, or a train more than one thousand miles in length. The four great lines from the Lakes to the seaboard would each have to run four hundred cars a day for half the year to carry this grain to market. Speaking of the grain-trade, Mr. Ruggles says,—‘Its existence is a new fact in the history of man. In quantity, it already much exceeds the whole export of cereals from the Russian Empire, the great compeer of the United States, whose total export of cereals was in 1857 but forty-nine million bushels, being less than half the amount carried in 1861 upon the American Lakes. It was the constant aim of ancient Rome, even in the zenith of its power, to provision the capital and the adjacent provinces from the outlying portions of the empire. The yearly crop contributed by Egypt was fifteen million bushels. Under the prudent administration of the Emperor Severus, a large store of corn was accumulated and kept on hand, sufficient to guard the empire from famine for seven years. The total amount thus provided was but one hundred and ninety million bushels. The product of 1860 in the five Lake States of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, was three hundred and fifty-four million bushels.’

Another branch of the Lake trade, which is yet in its infancy, but which promises to reach vast proportions in a few years, is the iron and copper trade of Lake Superior. In 1864 about two hundred and forty-eight thousand tons of iron ore and seventeen thousand tons of copper ore and metal were shipped from that lake,—enough to load thirteen hundred and twenty-five vessels of two hundred tons burden. This trade has wholly grown up within the last ten years.

Let the Erie and Oswego Canals be again enlarged, as advocated so ably by Mr. Ruggles, let the railroad lines be equipped with double tracks, and this trade of the Lake country will soon follow them up and outstrip their efforts. The man is now living in Chicago, hardly past middle age, who, less than thirty years ago shipped the first invoice of grain from that city which now ships fifty millions; and should he live to the common age of mankind, he will probably see the shipment of a hundred millions from that port alone.

The population of Illinois has doubled in each of

*See Nos. for February and March, 1861—Vol. VII, pp. 226, 313.

the last two decades, and there is no reason why it should not continue to do so in the next. That would give it in 1870 about three and a half millions of people, most of them farmers and producers, and farmers who, by the help of their fertile soil, the ease of its cultivation, and the general use of agricultural machinery, are able to produce a very large amount of grain or meat to the working hand.

These fleets of sail-vessels and steamers, and these railroad-trains which go Eastward thus loaded with grain and provisions, return West with freight more various, though as valuable. The teas, silks, and spices of India, the coffee of Brazil, the sugar and cigars of Cuba, the wines and rich fabrics of France, the varied manufactures of England, and the products of the New England workshops and factories, all find a market in the Northwest.

What, then, is the proper and sufficient outlet of this commerce? The Canadians, although their share of it is only one-quarter as large as our own, have shown us the way. They have constructed canals connecting Lakes Erie and Ontario, and others around the rapids of the St. Lawrence.—Let us do the same on the American side, so that vessels may load in Chicago or Milwaukee, and deliver their cargoes in New York, Boston, or Liverpool, without breaking bulk. To Europe this is the shorter route, as the figures will show.—

Distance from Chicago to New York	
by lakes, canal, and river.....	1,500 miles.
Distance from New York to Liverpool.....	2,980 "
	4,480 "
Distance from Chicago to Montreal by	
Welland Canal.....	1,348 miles.
Distance from Montreal to Liverpool.....	2,740 "
	4,088 "

The St. Lawrence River is the natural outlet of the Lakes, and, if rendered accessible to us by canals, must be the cheapest outlet. It is well known that a few years ago corn was worth on the prairies of Illinois only ten cents per bushel, when the same article was selling in New York at seventy cents, six-sevenths of the price being consumed in transportation. The consequence was, that many farmers found it more for their interest to use their surplus corn for fuel than to sell it for ten cents.—The great disturbance in values caused by the war and the vast demand for grain and forage for the army, have reduced this disproportion in prices very much for the time, but it may be looked for again on the return of peace.

Now it would seem that one of the most important questions to be settled in this country is how to cheapen food. If by the construction of these canals to give access to the St. Lawrence, grain can be laid down in New York ten cents a bushel cheaper than it now is done, the saving on the present shipments of breadstuffs from the Lakes would be ten millions of dollars annually. It is probable, however, that the saving in freight would be much greater than this, if the canals were built of sufficient capacity to admit the largest class of Lake vessels. This direct trade between the Upper Lakes and Europe was commenced a few years before the breaking out of the Rebellion, and was beginning to assume important proportions, when the war put a stop to it, as it has to so much of our foreign commerce.

While the present article was in preparation, the bill for the construction of these canals passed the House of Representatives, as also one for the deepening of the Illinois and Michigan Canals, concern-

ing which the report of the Hon. Isaac N. Arnold, of Illinois, chairman of the committee of the House on the defence of lakes and rivers, thus remarks:

—“The realization of the grand idea of a ship-canal from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi, for military and commercial purposes, is the great work of the age. In effect, commercially, it turns the Mississippi into Lake Michigan, and makes an outlet for the Great Lakes at New Orleans, and of the Mississippi at New York. It brings together the two great systems of water communication of our country,—the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence, and the canals connecting the Lakes with the ocean on the east, and the Mississippi and Missouri, with all their tributaries on the west and south. This communication, so vast, can be effected at small expense, and with no long delay. It is but carrying out the plan of Nature. A great river, rivalling the St. Lawrence in volume, at no distant day was discharged from Lake Michigan, by the Illinois, into the Mississippi. Its banks, its currents, its islands, and deposits can still be easily traced, and it only needs a deepening of the present channel for a few miles, to re-open a magnificent river from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi.”

It is a very important point, in considering this question of the enlargement of existing canals and the construction of new ones, that they have, under the new conditions of naval warfare, come to be an important element in the harbor defences of the Lakes. We have the testimony of Captain Ericsson himself, whose Monitor vessels have already done so much for the country, as to this availability. He writes,—“An impregnable war-vessel, twenty-five feet wide and two hundred feet long, with a shot proof turret, carrying a gun of fifteen inch calibre, with a ball of four hundred and fifty pounds, and capable of destroying any hostile vessel that can be put on the Lakes, will draw, without ammunition, coal, or stores, but six feet and six inches water, and consequently will need only a canal wide and deep enough to float a vessel of those dimensions, with locks of sufficient size to pass it.”

Great Britain has already secured to herself the means of access to the Lakes by her system of Canadian canals, and the Military Committee of the House express the opinion, that, in case of a war with that power, “a small fleet of light-draught, heavily armed, iron-clad gunboats, could, in one short month, in despite of any opposition that could be made by extemporized batteries, pass up the St. Lawrence, and shell every city and village from Ogdensburg to Chicago. At one blow it could sweep our commerce from that entire chain of lakes. Such a fleet would have it in its power to inflict a loss to be reckoned only by hundreds of millions, so vast is the wealth thus exposed to the depredations of a maritime enemy.” We were saved from such a blow, a few months ago, only by the failure of the Rebel agents in Canada to procure, either, by purchase or piracy, a swift armed steamer.

Ever since the War of 1812, England has been preparing, in the event of another war, to strike at that, our vital point. In 1814 the Duke of Wellington declared “that a naval superiority on the Lakes is a *sine qua non* of success in war on the frontier of Canada.” Years before, William Hall, Governor of the Northwestern Territory, made the same declaration to our Government, and the capture of Detroit by the British in 1812 was due to their failure to respond to his appeal for a naval force. In 1817 the Lakes were put on a peace establishment of one gun on each side, which was a good bargain for England, she having at that time

larger interests on the Lakes than the United States. Now ours exceed hers in the ratio of four to one.

What said the London *Times* in January, 1862, in reference to the Trent excitement? 'As soon as the St. Lawrence opens again there will be an end of our difficulty. We can then pour into the Lakes such a fleet of gunboats, and other craft, as will give us the complete and immediate command of those waters. Directly the navigation is clear, we can send up vessel after vessel without restriction, except such as are imposed by the size of the canals. The Americans would have no such resource. They would have no access to the Lakes from the sea, and it is impossible that they could construct vessels of any considerable power in the interval that would elapse before the ice broke up. With the opening of spring the Lakes would be ours.'

This is just what the English did in the War of 1812. They secured the command of the Lakes at the beginning of the war, and kept it and that of all the adjacent country, till Perry built a fleet on Lake Erie, with which he wrested their supremacy from them by hard fighting. Let us not be caught in that way a second time.

There is a party in the country opposed to the enlargement of these canals. It is represented in Congress by able men. Their principal arguments are the following: 1st, that there is no military necessity for the enlargement; that materials for building gunboats can be accumulated at various points on the Lakes, to be used in the event of war. 2nd, that by sending a strong force to destroy the Canadian canals, the enemy's gunboats can be prevented from entering the Lakes. A third argument is, that it is useless to attempt to contend with England, the greatest naval power in the world; that we shall never have vessels enough to afford a fleet on the coast and one on the Lakes; that England would never allow us to equal her in that respect, and that it would be changing the entire policy of the nation to attempt it. A fourth argument which we have seen gravely stated against the canal enlargements is, that the mouth of the St. Lawrence is the place to defend the Lakes, and that, if that hole were stopped, the rats could not enter.

In reply to the first of these arguments, the above quotation from the London *Times* shows that the British Government well know the importance of striking the first blow, and that long before our gunboats could be launched that blow would have been delivered.

As to the second we may be sure that the Canadian canals would be defended with all the power and skill of England; and we know, by the experience of the last four years, the difference between offensive and defensive warfare, both sides being equally matched in fighting qualities.

The third argument is the same used by Jefferson and his party before the War of 1812. He thought that to build war vessels was only to build them for the British, as they would be sure to take them. As to changing the policy of the nation, by increasing our navy, let us hope that it is already changed, and forever. Its policy has heretofore been a Southern policy, a slave-holders' policy; it has discouraged the navy, and kept it down to the smallest possible dimensions, because a navy is essentially a Northern institution. You cannot man a navy with slaves or mean whites;

it must have a commercial marine behind it, and that the South never had. Our navy ought never again to be inferior in fighting strength to that of England. In that way we shall always avoid war.

As to the plan of defending the Lakes at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, we would ask this question: If the blockade of Wilmington was a task beyond the power of our navy, how would it be able to blockade an estuary from fifty to a hundred miles in width?

With these enlarged canals, by which gunboats and monitors could be moved from the Atlantic and the Mississippi to the Lakes and *vice versa*, and by the system of shore defences recommended some years ago by General Totten, namely, strong fortifications at Mackinaw, perfectly commanding those straits, and serving as a refuge to war steamers, works at the lower end of Lake Huron, at Detroit, and at the entrance of Niagara River, these waters will be protected from all foreign enemies. Lake Ontario will also need a system of works to protect our important canals and railroads, which in many places approach so near the shore as to be in danger from an enterprising enemy. It is recommended by the Military Committee, that a naval depot should be established at Erie, as the most safe and suitable harbor on the Lake of that name.

If, as is probable, a naval station and depot should be thought necessary on the Upper Lakes the city of Milwaukee has strong claims to be chosen for its site. There is the best and safest harbor on Lake Michigan, so situated as to be easily defended, in the midst of a heavily-timbered country, accessible to the iron and copper of Lake Superior and the coal of Illinois. Milwaukee enjoys one of the cheapest markets for food, together with a very healthy climate. Finally, she is connected by rail with the great Western centres of population, so that all the necessary troops for her defence could be gathered about her at twenty-four hours notice.

It may be well here to remark, that as yet the Northwest has had little assistance from the General Government. Large sums of money have annually been laid out in the defences of the seaboard, both North and South, while this immense Lake region has had the annual appropriation of one eighteen pounder! Every small river and petty inlet on the Southern coast, whence a bale of cotton or a barrel of turpentine could be shipped, has had its fort; while the important post of Mackinaw, the Gibraltar of the Lakes, is garrisoned by an invalid sergeant, who sits solitary on its ruinous walls.

The result at which we arrive is, that these canal enlargements would at once be valuable, both as commercial and military works. They have a national importance, in that they will assist in feeding and defending the nation. The States interested in them have a population of ten millions, they have seventy-one representatives in Congress, and they have furnished fully one half of the fighting men who have gone to defend our flag and protect our nationality in the field. How that work has been done, let the victorious campaigns of Grant and Sherman attest. Those great leaders are Western men, and their invincible columns, who, from Belmont to Savannah, have, like Cromwell's Ironsides, 'never met an enemy whom they have not broken in pieces,' are men of Western birth or training.

The following is an American view of Northern Frontier Defences, from the *Ogdensburg Advance*:

In an article on this subject some few days since, we attempted to show the error into which our Government had fallen, by commencing to fortify at the western end of our Northern frontier; and that the true policy for the protection of our lakes would be to shut out ingress from the sea, by placing fortifications upon the St. Lawrence river, which being accomplished we could safely trust to the overwhelming number and power of our lake marine. In that article we also endeavored to show that the bar in front of our village furnished a very appropriate site for such purpose inasmuch as all vessels would come within short and easy range of its guns. Important, however, as the exterior of this village is for the purpose of mere defence to the property and business of the west, it is entitled to much greater consideration for the advantages it possesses for serving as a base of operations for the invasion of Canada whenever that exigency becomes a necessity. And first as to the facilities it possesses for massing of troops and munitions of war: We have two railroads terminating here—one piercing that great avenue the New York Central, from which branch off in all directions west, and south, other railroads that bring this place within a few hours reach of those extreme of our country. The other leads to that great net work of New England railroads which traverse almost every town and village within her territory. Besides these we have water communication by means of the St. Lawrence, directly with Lake Ontario, and with the exception of a short break between Lake Erie, for which a railroad is substituted, with all the States lying west of us to the waters of the Mississippi. So far then as mere accessibility of convenience for collecting the material of war is concerned, it possesses advantages equal in any degree to those of any other town or village upon our Northern frontier. But these advantages, although great, are not to be compared in importance with those we possess from our being within such short striking distance of the very vitals of Canada. At this place the St. Lawrence is about a mile in width and under cover of the guns from the fort we propose, the troops who accumulated here could easily be transported to the other shore. Once then in siege the terminus of the Ottawa and Prescott

Railroad, leading to the capital of the Canadas and whose depot is immediately on the shore of the river, and a short quarter of a mile back, we tap that great artery of the Canadas, through which their very life-blood flows, the Grand Trunk Railroad. The communication between the two Provinces being cut off by the St. Lawrence River and the Grand Trunk Railroad, but one other, of very little practical importance exists—that by means of the Rideau Canal, at Ottawa, and from thence to Kingston. If this also be desired to be taken we are only within fifty-five miles of Ottawa City—the entrance to the canal from the Ottawa River. The chain of locks at that place once destroyed would require quite a lengthy campaign in which to effect their replacement. This brief statement of facts must show, we think, that Ogdensburg is the key that not only locks out the entrance from the sea, but also unlocks to us the defences of a neighbor who may need ere long some correction for growing misconduct. Her chief power, the protection of England, would be most effectually crippled by lines of communication being cut off, and the whole of the upper provinces would be obliged to bear the burnt of our arms single-handed and alone. The result of such a combat needs no prophet to foretell.

I leave the country to judge if eight hundred thousand pounds expended in small arms would not be more efficient in defending the Canadas than one million three hundred thousand ~~expended~~ expended in fortifications. It is not presumption in me to say I know something of the subject I have been writing upon. I was trained in my youth in the Regular Service to European tactics; I was actively employed the whole of the war of 1812, and when the 104th was reduced to a skeleton, I volunteered to command a gun boat, with a crew of 60 men and two heavy guns. I have no pecuniary object in view; my only aim is the continuation of British connexion. Any patriot editor that will reprint these crude ideas of mine, jumbled together, will confer a favor, and one copy mailed to me, will be full payment for the copyright.